

Chapter 4

Supporting Strategies

Chapter Overview

This chapter sets out in more detail the Council's specific strategies for improving conditions for particular types of journey or reducing specific transport problems. These expand on the broad actions outlined in Chapter 3 and form the basis of the Council's approach to tackling the problems that will be set out in the following chapters.

Network Strategy

The County Council's Strategy for highway network development is summarised below in three parts:

- > The recommendations for network development made in the Transport Networks Review
- > The County Council's proposals for meeting its duties under the Traffic Management Act
- > The County Council's proposals on lorry routeing

In addition the proposals for network development need to be read in conjunction with the County Council's proposals for asset management as set out in Chapter 12.

Transport Networks Review

The Transport Networks Review (TNR) was a major study undertaken for the County Council between 2002 and 2004 to develop a longer-term strategy for the development of the county's strategic transport networks, covering all modes. The following gives some of the recommended actions that have emerged from the Review. Some work is still ongoing to finalise the proposals necessary to implement the Review.

Roads & Routeing

The TNR has allowed the County Council to develop a detailed road hierarchy. The purpose of this hierarchy is to assist the County Council in decision making on vehicle routeing and signing, development control decisions and, to an extent, the standard of the route (in terms of the alignment, speed limit etc). Levels of maintenance are related to demand as opposed to status within the hierarchy. Changes in status will not

therefore directly affect the amount of maintenance, although if this affects the level of traffic on a road, and in particular the number of lorries, then this would reduce the need for maintenance on it.

The hierarchy is as follows:

Route type	Primary Role	Route Treatment
Trunk Roads	Longer distance trips, particularly freight	Based on government criteria - very limited access
National Primary Routes	Longer distance trips but also some intra-county movements	Higher standards of alignment and speed; normally bypassing settlements; limited development access; signing for longer distance destinations
County A-Roads (major)	More important movements within the county	Generally good standard of alignment, although some poorer sections possible; occasionally passing through settlements; some limited flexibility on development access; signing for both local and longer distance destinations
County A-Roads (minor)	Linking settlements to major roads and providing missing links	Generally good standard of alignment, although some poorer sections likely; often passing through settlements; reasonable flexibility on development access; signing for both local and longer distance destinations
B-Roads	Linking A-roads to local areas and between local areas	Variable standards; generally passing through settlements; reasonable flexibility on development access; signing for local destinations only
Unclassified roads (i)	Main access routes to local villages	Generally more than 4m wide; signing for local destinations
Unclassified roads (ii)	All other routes	Generally less than 4m wide; only signed where no alternative route exists

Where roads are not currently of a standard which is appropriate for their role in the hierarchy then the Council will implement appropriate measures. Where roads are suggested for upgrading in status then this will not generally occur unless the route is of the appropriate standard.

The following changes were suggested as needed in the Transport Networks Review:

Road	Location	Measure Suggested
B4100	Bicester to A43	Upgrade to A road
B430	M40 J10 to A34	Downgrade to unclassified (with weight limit)
A4095	Bicester to A4260	Downgrade to B road (with weight limit)
B4030	A44 to A4260	Weight Limit
B4027	A40 to A44	Downgrade to unclassified (with weight limit)

A4260	Kidlington	Downgrade to B road
A40	M40 J6 to M40 J8	Downgrade to B road
B4015	A4074 to b480	Downgrade to unclassified
B4508	Shrivenham/Faringdon	Downgrade to unclassified
A4095	Faringdon to Witney	Downgrade to B road
B4477	Witney to Carterton	Upgrade to A road
A424	Burford to Stow-on-the-Wold	Downgrade to B road with weight limit (subject to agreement with Gloucestershire C.C.)
A44	Oxford to Moreton-in-Marsh	Signing to discourage HGVs. Possible change in status in longer term (dependant upon improvements on alternative A40 route and subject to agreement with Gloucestershire C.C.)

These changes to the network were the subject of consultation in Spring 2005 and have not been confirmed following this. An assessment of the comments received and the impact of suggested changes will be carried out for final hierarchy proposals to be included in the final LTP in March 2006.

Improvements

The TNR strategy sought to balance the requirement to consider specific problems and issues on an individual basis while at the same time being coherent and consistent in its approach across the county. The approach taken to identify road improvements can be summarised as:

- > The primary focus has been on addressing the environmental impacts of traffic, in particular where routes pass through villages and affect overall quality of life;
- > A range of measures were considered in turn, such as strategic re-routing of traffic, weight limits and traffic management measures; and
- > Where such measures did not appear to address the problems consideration was given to improvements such as bypass schemes.

The case for schemes was prioritised in terms of:

- > Levels of congestion;
- > Scale of environmental problems;
- > Numbers of HGVs;
- > Predicted future traffic increases; and
- > Wider impacts.

Generally it was not recommended that route improvements should be provided solely to increase capacity. The opportunity should be taken, when resolving capacity problems, to seek to provide improved bus priority to enable public transport to offer a faster and more reliable alternative.

Transport Networks Review - Proposed Road Schemes

Roads (County Council proposals 2006-2021):

- > A415 improvements
- > Banbury South East Relief Road
- > A40 Improvements
- > B4009 Watlington Relief Road

Roads (Suggested improvements required for Trunk Roads):

- > M40 Junction 11
- > M40 Junction 9
- > A34/A40 Junction improvement

Roads (associated with developments):

- > Wantage North-east Bypass
- > Harwell Bypass & A34 Junction Improvements

Roads (subject to further study):

- > Chipping Norton eastern bypass
- > Abingdon Southern Relief Road
- > Henley Traffic Relief Measures
- > Burford/Fulbrook traffic relief measures

Public Transport

For public transport the TNR recommended that the focus should be on providing high quality “expressway” services on the most heavily used routes. These would include;

- > Priority for buses at locations where congestion is experienced;
- > Use of remote park and ride sites close to origin of trips;
- > High quality branded vehicles;
- > Real time information at stops;
- > Pre-paid ticketing.

These ideas are being investigated for implementation through the County Bus Strategy. Selective bus priority at other locations across the county was also suggested by the TNR. The Public Transport schemes proposed in the TNR are outlined in the box overleaf.

Transport Networks Review - Proposed Public Transport Schemes

“Expressway” including remote park and ride

- > Carterton/Witney to Oxford
- > Didcot/Abingdon to Oxford
- > Bicester to Oxford

Bus priority on strategic network

- > A40 Green Road Roundabout
- > A44 Yarnton to Peartree
- > A415 Frilford
- > A415 approaches to A34
- > A4130 Milton
- > A4260 Kidlington
- > B4044 Swinford Toll Bridge
- > Locations within Abingdon, Banbury, Bicester, Witney

Information and Technology

Following the recommendations of the TNR the County Council will be actively investigating the provision of roadside real time variable message signing to allow drivers to avoid congestion by re-routing and to inform drivers of parking availability within towns, particularly Oxford. Such a system could play a major part in the County Council’s strategy to fulfil its Network Management Duty.

Network Management Duty

Part 2 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 places a network management duty on Local Traffic Authorities (LTAs). This requires LTAs to manage their road network with a view to ensuring safe and efficient movement of traffic. This applies not only on the parts of the network for which they are directly responsible but also on networks, strategic and local, for which other traffic authorities are responsible. In this context traffic includes both pedestrians and cyclists, as well as motor vehicles.

In order to carry out the duty effectively the LTA will need to put in place a structure which can deliver this duty on three levels: long term strategic, short/medium term planning and operation and day to day management. This needs to be carried out in such a way as to deal equitably with both the LTAs own road space needs and those of third parties.

When the Act is fully in force LTAs will have some new powers and some existing powers extended in order to assist them in tackling congestion. New processes and procedures will need to be introduced and new systems established to augment those currently in place. Valuable network management experience gained prior to the Act will need to be focused to establish the most efficient and effective way of delivering the Traffic Management Duty.

The County Council has a team dedicated to co-ordinating the day-to-day operation of the network. Notices for streetworks are expected for the County Council's own works as well as for the works of third parties and legitimate obstructions are licensed and inspected and action is taken with regard to unlicensed obstructions.

In addition, and in recognition of the particular issues of carrying out highway works in and around a major city, the County Council has an Oxford City Co-ordinator whose role is to co-ordinate all highway related stakeholder interests in Oxford including those relating to both regular and one off "events". This role involves regular contact with stakeholders, including maintaining a particular understanding with local public transport providers and the police. This level of co-ordination coupled with a high level of open and honest stakeholder contact has proved to be very successful in avoiding serious congestion and public complaint. This combination of co-ordinated programming and early publicity is being extended to the remainder of the county.

A private contractor carries out the enforcement of parking regulations in Oxford. This allows resources to be diverted or increased to target particular areas of the network during road works to keep diversion routes clear and also gives the flexibility to carry out enforcement campaigns from time to time in conjunction with the local police. Maintaining the flow on main bus routes is a priority.

The road network in Oxfordshire is not only influenced by the strategic routes running through it but also by the M1 and M4 motorways passing through adjoining counties. The co-ordination of incident management is already an important part of the County Council's liaison with other LTAs but will need to be updated to cover the requirements of the Act particularly in respect of dealing with the new Highways Agency Traffic Officers.

The first parts of the Act came into force on 4th January 2004 and it will ultimately, through a series of Government orders, provide LTAs with a responsibility to provide better conditions for all road users and a tool kit with which to proactively manage the road network.

The County Council intends to embrace the spirit of the Act and, through a combination of organisational and procedural change and the employment of relevant technology, will fully discharge its Network Management Duty.

The breadth and scope of the Network Management Duty and the need for a “whole authority” approach argue for a Traffic Manager with status and influence within and beyond the County Council who will be both a focal point and a champion. For this reason the role has been given to the Head of Transport.

To support the Head of Transport in carrying out this duty the County Council intends to introduce a small but focused network co-ordination team to build on our successful co-ordination experiences within Oxford.

In addition clear responsibility will be given to each of the three Assistant Heads of Transport for the strategic planning of the network, for optimising the use of the network and for ensuring the proper day-to-day management of all interventions and obstructions by coordination and control.

It is expected that the structural and procedural changes will be in place by the start of April 2006.

The County Council is already in contact with other relevant LTAs in order to establish appropriate co-ordination protocols and to share best practice. There remain some historic cross border differences between Oxfordshire and its neighbours which will either need to be resolved or firmly established as policy so that they can be properly considered in relation to the discharge of its Traffic Management Duty.

The Transport Networks Review will form the basis for strategic decisions and close working will be required between the Council’s planning, delivery and maintenance teams to develop strategic policy. This will be followed in developing our own works programmes and with regard to external development programmes.

To support the Traffic Manager it will be necessary to strengthen the existing staff to form a Streetworks team capable of operating the new powers provided by the Act, including those relating to permit schemes.

The new Civil Enforcement powers will be used and the parking enforcement team strengthened to make best use of the opportunities that those powers bring. A countywide SPA will be introduced by the middle of the Plan period.

A combination of objectives and subjective measures will be used to assess how well the County Council is discharging its Network Management Duty. Targets will be set relating to both the organisational aspects of the work and those which relate to the overall Local Transport Plan objectives, such as managing congestion. Feedback from stakeholders will also play a major part in assessing how successful the County Council has been.

Strategies for monitoring the performance of the developing network and for optimising its use will be developed. Performance data from a variety of sources, for example feedback from the recently introduced “Real Time Bus

Information” system in Oxford will provide a constant and timely record of performance on the premium bus routes.

Freight

Freight Quality Partnership

A Freight Quality Partnership for Oxfordshire was set up in 2003. The partnership comprises representatives from transport operators, businesses and business groups, local councils and local residents. In its first two years the Partnership has focused on the issues of countywide lorry routeing (see below) and Oxford city centre deliveries. At its meeting in May 2005 the Partnership decided that four issues would be investigated in the future:

Topic	Key Issues and Actions
Oxford City Centre	Develop and take forward action plan to disseminate previous research Co-ordinate action with other work in city centre
Lorry Routeing	Continue to support lorry routeing map Consider locations of and facilities at rest areas Signage and enforcement Cross-boundary issues
Rail Freight	Potential demand and Supply of rail freight in and near Oxfordshire Identify opportunities for achievable solutions for rail freight
Policy	Delivery times Working time directive issues

Lorry Routeing

The FQP has considered the most appropriate routes for freight movement across the county and deliveries to main locations within the county. As a result of this an advisory lorry route map has been produced.

This map shows:

- > Lorry routes for through movements;
- > Routes suitable for local access;
- > Towns/villages considered unsuitable for through lorry traffic;
- > Height and length restrictions on routes; and
- > Locations of services open to lorries.

In addition the map shows the most suitable routes for deliveries into Oxford city centre from the Ring Road.

It is intended that, where appropriate, the routeing shown on the map should be reflected by signing on the ground. The implementation of the routeing measures recommended in the Transport Networks Review (see below) offer an opportunity for this.

HGV Restrictions

In the Transport Networks Review a number of locations were identified as being suitable for new weight limits. Equally a number of the suggestions for changes to the classification of routes were based on the desire to discourage lorry use on unsuitable roads.

As well as formal restrictions the County Council will consider whether advisory signing (either on to favoured routes or away from unsuitable routes) can be used more widely as a means of re-enforcing the route hierarchy.

Bus Strategy

Buses are at the heart of this Local Transport Plan. The Bus Strategy builds upon the past success of Oxfordshire in enabling and encouraging a growth in bus use. It describes how the Council will continue to create the conditions in which commercial bus services can thrive, whilst ensuring that subsidised services are provided where necessary to supplement the commercial network, which best meet local needs and provide best value for money. It identifies a hierarchy of services:

- > Premium Routes, running without subsidy at “*Turn up and go*” frequencies with high quality infrastructure;
- > Hourly services, some running commercially and some with subsidy, with selected infrastructure enhancements to improve attractiveness and viability;
- > Feeder services, provided in a variety of ways to serve the lightly populated areas off main routes.

Through this strategy, the County Council aims to achieve an overall 2% growth per annum in bus use.

Premium Routes

A programme to develop these high frequency core services - including longer distance expressway services from Carterton/ Witney, Didcot/ Abingdon, and Bicester to Oxford - has been developed. Measures to be taken to support this network include:

- > Ensuring buses have excellent access to main centres;
- > Ensuring major new development is located where it can be served by these routes;
- > Bus lanes and bus gates to protect buses from traffic delay;
- > Bus priority at traffic signals;
- > Management of parking and road works to minimise delays to buses;
- > Effective enforcement of traffic laws on bus routes;

- > Careful design of traffic calming to minimise impact on buses;
- > High quality bus stop infrastructure;
- > Further improvement of Park & Ride sites and investigation of remote Park & Ride;
- > Quality Partnerships with bus operators; and
- > Real Time Information (Subject to a successful pilot).

Hourly services

These routes will run at least hourly at standard times between 0700 and 1900 on Mondays to Saturdays. All settlements of over 1000 population will be on the network. Whilst some will undoubtedly require subsidy, the viability of the network will be improved through good access and facilities in town centres and high quality facilities at other principal stops.

Feeder Services

It is recognised that most of these services will require subsidies. Subsidised services will be reviewed on an area-by-area basis, with two areas programmed for review each year and contracts normally lasting four years. Characteristics of subsidy review will be:

- > Home-to-School and public transport contracts reviewed together;
- > On bus surveys of usage by Council staff, supplemented by information from Parish Transport Representatives;
- > A computer study of public transport accessibility in the area, using Accession;
- > Consultation with bus operators;
- > Full consultation on all proposals with Parish Councils - including assistance with parish surveys, liaison with appointed parish transport representatives, and a joint meeting;
- > In most cases, tenders invited for services;
- > Achievable standards set for service quality;
- > Preference given to tenderers proposing higher quality vehicles;
- > Specific policies set for some (but not all) categories of service;
- > Subsidy decisions by Council Committee, on the basis of best value for money; and
- > Alternatives to conventional bus services encouraged where appropriate - for example:
 - Community transport (with the assistance of officers employed to support and assist CT operators);
 - Spare time in social and health care vehicles' schedules to provide public services;
 - Flexibly routed demand responsive services; and
 - Connecting feeder services.

Other Supporting Policies

Further policies are in place to support services at all levels in the hierarchy:

- > Provision of high quality interchange facilities where services meet one another (or trains);
- > Development of through, joint and network tickets (subject to further consultation);
- > Ensuring high quality information as laid down in the Transport Information Strategy for Bus Services;
- > A proactive approach to ensuring provision for people with disabilities, including vehicles, stop infrastructure and driver training on conventional services, provision (in partnership with District Councils) of extra Dial-A-Ride services specially for people with disabilities and support and advice for voluntary groups in providing transport;
- > Working in partnership with health trusts and others to improve and develop viable bus links to major traffic generators outside traditional town and city centres;
- > The County Council is currently undertaking a Review of how different service areas contribute to aspects of how children travel to school;
- > Active steps to further improve air quality on bus routes, including a drivers' code of conduct, standards set in Quality Partnerships and subsidy contracts, ticketing and other measures to reduce bus stopping times and traffic management to ensure smooth bus movement;
- > Continuing to provide facilities for express coaches in Oxford City centre and exploring additional stopping points elsewhere; and
- > Continuing to encourage development of commercial services by bus operators, seeking a Quality Contract to give the Council overall network control only in the event that operators are unwilling to co-operate in commercial service development.

The Council is confident that all of these measures, taken together, provide a firm framework for increasing the contribution that bus services make to tackling congestion and delivering accessibility.

Real Time Information (RTI)

Technological advance now provides the means of delivering up-to-date information at bus stops, taking into account any delays caused by traffic congestion or other disruption which will allow passengers greater confidence about the time their bus will arrive. The first phase of this new system is being installed in the Kidlington and Banbury Road area of Oxford. A companion website provides 'virtual displays' of anticipated arrival times of buses at stops across the wider network.

The Oxfordshire Real Time Information system is being developed on a partnership basis with bus operators. The operators are meeting the costs of the on-bus and in-depot equipment and the County Council is meeting the costs of the central computer system, radio infrastructure and on-street signs. If successful it is anticipated that the system will be gradually

extended across Oxfordshire. In addition to those on-street signs at bus stops the County Council will also fund information screens listing expected departures from other nearby stops at rail stations, shopping centres, and other appropriate sites served by equipped buses, in partnership with site operators.

The Council will also develop the functionality and legibility of the RTI website, and will investigate the feasibility of delivering a Text Messaging facility. It will also investigate the feasibility of linking with other Local Authority RTI systems, so that the arrival of buses from surrounding areas can be predicted on Oxfordshire signs and the website.

Transport Direct

The County Council formally adopted a Transport Information Strategy for bus services in March 2002, and this has formed one of the Standard Conditions of Contract for all services tendered since October 2002. The County Council is a committed member of the South East Public Transport Information Forum and as such the telephone number for "Traveline" must be shown on all leaflets.

Rail Strategy

The County Council has limited but clear opportunities to influence rail use to, from and within Oxfordshire. It is recognised that schemes primarily aimed at extending or improving the strategic rail network are not appropriate for inclusion in the LTP. However, measures designed to achieve low-cost, effective improvements to rail stations to aid accessibility, provide information and promote use will contribute to achieving LTP objectives. In all cases the County Council will be working closely with the rail industry, and where relevant, other local and transport authorities, to deliver these improvements and add value to other investment in services and infrastructure. It is especially important to co-ordinate delivery of network improvements as the new 10 year Greater Western rail franchise commences in April 2006.

Part of the rail network in Oxfordshire runs parallel to the A34 and increased local and strategic rail use for freight and passenger movement would reduce the pressure on this congested route. Oxfordshire's requirements for inclusion in the Greater Western rail franchise focus on seeing an enhancement of services between Oxford, Didcot and Reading, London as well as improvements on the Cotswold Line and Bicester Branch Line. The last of these links closely with the strong regional aspiration for East-West Rail between Oxford and Bedford via Bletchley/Milton Keynes. This proposal is supported by the Regional Transport Strategy and all authorities along the route and is tied to the Milton Keynes growth area and the identification of Bicester as one of Oxfordshire's growth towns in the South-East Plan.

The role of Oxford Station is integral to the effective performance of Oxford as a transport hub. This is recognised in the Regional Transport Strategy and its expansion or relocation forms the focus of transport improvements in the urban regeneration of Oxford's West End quarter.

Alongside aspirations for these more significant schemes, the Rail Strategy focuses on improving facilities at key local stations where there is potential for growth in use and modal shift. The core elements of the Rail Strategy are set out below:

Station improvements

These will include:

- > Oxford station expansion or relocation - to improve operational flexibility, create additional capacity and give Oxford a gateway to cater for anticipated rail traffic growth in performing its regional hub role. This is linked to Network Rail plans for resignalling;
- > Didcot Parkway - to create a full multi-modal interchange incorporating better bus and car parking facilities within a redesigned station forecourt;
- > Charlbury station - interchange improvements particularly to extend the car park and enhance bus access;
- > Targeted improvements to facilities at local stations where there is potential for growth in use and modal shift - included in this are better waiting facilities and secure cycle parking, good signage and more car parking to improve overall accessibility.

Information and Promotion

The County Council will:

- > Work closely with rail operators and local councils to provide good quality rail passenger information, local community leisure and tourist information and links to the Public Rights of Way network to promote and market rail use, especially for off-peak travel;
- > Continue to explore the role Community Rail Partnerships might play in protecting and promoting local and rural rail services in the longer term;
- > Co-ordinate the introduction of Real Time Bus Passenger Information with rail station improvements.

Casualty Reduction Strategy

Reducing casualties by improving and maintaining the county's roads and educating people in safer travel behaviour is a cornerstone of this Plan, with Safer Roads being one of the five LTP objectives. Chapter 3 has identified the main issues concerning road safety, which include:

- > The relatively high risks and accident levels associated with private travel, despite significant and welcome reductions in recent years;
- > The strong public appreciation of the importance of road safety as a key strand of community safety, as demonstrated for example through consultation on community strategies;
- > The County Council's clear objectives to meet (and hopefully exceed) national casualty reduction targets set for 2010;
- > The links between safer roads, casualty levels and particular sections of the community - notably people living in disadvantaged areas, users of rural roads (in relation to severity of injury) and powered two-wheeler users;
- > How meeting road safety objectives can demonstrably contribute to wider policy objectives, for example improving health and economic performance.

The County Council's strategy for reducing casualties is to reduce the number and severity of accidents by improving the design and layout of the highway where necessary to address known safety problems.

Changes to the design and layout of stretches of road and junctions where accident statistics identify a clear road safety problem will be taken forward. Sites have already been identified for treatment in 2006/07 and the County Council's accident database will be closely monitored to identify problem sites to be investigated for appropriate treatment. Measures to improve road safety will also be built in to schemes which are primarily designed to meet other Plan objectives and into the design of new developments;

Better management of vehicle speeds

Measures, including new / extended speed limits, traffic calming and speed-reactive signs could be employed where speed is a factor. Changes to speed limits will be considered in line with the County Council's agreed criteria covering 20, 30/40 and 50mph limits respectively. The County Council will work closely with the Police and other agencies in the Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership, to ensure that enforcement is properly targeted;

Providing effective road safety education, training and publicity

The County Council will continue to provide and develop training programmes and other activities to improve road use skills and behaviour, to help to raise awareness and contribute to a culture of safe road use. Examples of these will include:

- > The 'Footsteps' programme for children, providing parent-focused child pedestrian training from aged 2. This provides tailored guidance and resources via Health visitors using DVD/video and supporting material;
- > Promotion of targeted, specialist campaigns raising awareness of, for example, the dangers of drink driving, mobile telephone use and fatigue;
- > The 'sitting tight' programme, to provide advice on correct fitting of child car seats;
- > Cycle training in primary schools.

Ensure that new development is planned in such a way as to prevent road safety problems being created.

This will be done by providing targeted advice to planning authorities and building in (or securing contributions to) provision of safe transport improvements both on-site and on the local highway network.

Parking Strategy

The management of parking is one of the most effective means of tackling congestion and its worst effects, such as air pollution, delay and unreliability of journeys. However, the ease with which visitors and shoppers can gain access to a place by car can influence its overall attractiveness and success. A balance therefore has to be struck between managing parking for transport purposes, offering attractive and viable alternatives, and maintaining a welcoming environment for those who, for whatever reason, need or choose to use their car.

Well-planned location, availability, price and enforcement of parking can contribute significantly to easing traffic flows, especially in the peak periods, making all journeys more reliable. It can also stimulate demand for bus services and thereby increase travel choices. This has been especially successful in central Oxford, where a managed approach to city centre parking, coupled with a well-established Park & Ride system and a comprehensive network of commercial bus services, has led to traffic flows on the approaches to the city centre being held at a constant level for almost 3 decades.

Controlled parking zones (CPZs) in residential areas protect local streets from intrusive long-stay commuter parking. They also have a strategic importance in keeping down the overall level of peak hour traffic. Problems have been particularly acute in parts of Oxford, where parking associated

with hospitals and university establishments has encroached onto residential streets and consequently traffic levels into and within the area are high. CPZs are programmed for implementation to deal with these problems. The introduction of a charge to cover the full costs of administration and enforcement would bring the city zones into line with existing zones elsewhere in the county and ensure that resources are not deflected away from implementing new necessary zones.

Whilst it will be difficult to replicate elsewhere the conditions that led to the successful approach in Oxford, some of the same principles of effective management can be applied across the county and contribute to achieving progress against LTP objectives. The following section outlines the main elements of the Parking Strategy:

Park & Ride

The County Council will:

- > Continue to invest in high quality facilities, in particular introducing modern terminal buildings with a range of facilities for the public;
- > Explore the market potential and transport benefits of introducing remote Park & Ride sites and services;
- > Maintain or increase the difference between parking charges at Park & Ride and central Oxford - this could be done through a combination of removing the parking charge at Park & Ride, which would bring a spin off benefit of single ticketing, and/or increasing charges in the city centre;
- > Work closely with City and District Councils to deliver these improvements.

Controlled Parking Zones

The County Council will:

- > Deliver new CPZs to protect local streets and achieve the strategic management of traffic, especially in the Headington/Marston area;
- > Introduce a permit charge to cover costs and limit unrestrained demand.

Enforcement

The County Council will:

- > Introduce a Countywide Special Parking Area (SPA) to ensure on-street parking controls are effective;
- > Target enforcement on main roads and bus routes to keep traffic moving and reduce congestion.

Public Parking

The County Council will:

- > Manage the overall availability and price of on-street parking to maintain the local economy, keep traffic levels down and support alternatives like Park & Ride.

- > Work closely with the City and District Councils to ensure good co-ordination and compatibility of the approach to parking and improve the quality of car parks.
- > identify key rail stations across the county where parking facilities can be improved to support increased accessibility to rail services.
- > Provide formal parking spaces where requested for people with disabilities.

Parking Standards

The County Council will work with planning authorities to apply parking standards for new development that help to deliver transport benefits, generally maintaining an element of restraint in towns centres where alternative transport is more readily available and applying realistic standards elsewhere to ensure parking overspill does not cause local amenity problems.

Travel Plans

The County Council recognises the significant role travel plans can have in meeting the LTP objectives. It is estimated that around 20% of peak hour traffic is created by the 'school run'. Although, for some, the car is the only available means of travelling to school for many others there are alternatives that would reduce traffic problems around school sites if used more extensively, including congestion and safety hazards. School Travel Plans (STPs) are a tried and tested means for schools to embrace the principles of sustainable travel and potentially secure investment in complementary facilities both on- and off-site to promote less reliance on the car. Around a third of the 360 schools in the county have already adopted STPs and the Government's School Travel Action Plan target of all schools having them by 2010 is a key County Council commitment. Staff and revenue resources have been reviewed in order to advance the programme of assistance to schools in developing STPs.

Work travel plans are increasingly enabling employers to make financial savings and reduce the environmental impact ("footprint") of their organisation. Oxfordshire County Council has itself adopted a Travel-for-Work policy and action plan that includes a broad range of measures to reduce unnecessary car use; in particular, a travel loan scheme offering discounts and interest-free loans for cycles and bus and rail season tickets to all Council employees. It has also embarked on a "Future First" initiative which incorporates commitments to reducing impacts of staff travel including high energy consumption, poor air quality, road congestion and inefficient land use. A Travel Plans Network exists comprising several of the county's larger employers such as BMW, Health Trusts, Universities, and business and retail parks. This group has shared good practice and has the capability of pooling resources to support bus services to and from main employment sites. The Oxfordshire Community Partnership is providing a

strong supporting role for the roll-out of work travel plans across the county by prioritising initiatives with small and medium-sized enterprises. This is led by business representatives who bring significant influence to bear.

Personalised travel planning is a concept new to Oxfordshire and one that will require additional resources to develop further. The County Council will, during the life of the LTP, research and consult on the benefits and value for money of developing a strategy for personalised travel planning and devise a pilot programme for testing and evaluation.

The Travel Plans Strategy comprises the following elements:

School Travel Plans

- > Adopt an Oxfordshire School Travel Strategy;
- > Work towards all schools having a travel plan in place by 2010 (School Travel Action Plan target);
- > Deliver effective, low-cost complementary improvements at schools through the transport capital programme;
- > Provide matched funding for schools successful in small capital grant bids;
- > Road safety education, training and publicity including cycle proficiency training; and
- > Work across service boundaries, e.g. Fire & Rescue, Trading Standards, Property, Learning & Culture, to co-ordinate resources, messages and processes to promote safety and sustainable travel and development.

Workplace Travel Plans

- > Review the approach and resourcing for workplace travel planning with a view to implementation during the Plan period;
- > Increase take-up of the Council's travel loan scheme;
- > Make use of the Travel Plans Network of major employers to promote best practice and add value to existing resources;
- > The Oxfordshire Community Partnership has a priority action to encourage businesses to promote sustainable methods of transport, especially amongst small and medium-sized enterprises; and
- > Pursue development control policies to ensure travel plan principles are built into development processes.

Personalised Travel Planning

- > Research and consult on a strategy for personalised travel planning with a view to adoption during 2006/07;
- > Devise a pilot programme for testing and evaluation during 2007/08; and

- > Subject to the success of a pilot, commence roll-out of a programme from 2008/09.

Development Control

The design of developments can play an important part in determining the amount and type of travel generated by them. Large new residential developments in particular offer the opportunity to encourage more sustainable travel and help meet a range of policy objectives. The County Council places a high priority on ensuring that all developments:

- > Are located in accordance with Development Plan policies;
- > Have the minimal adverse impact on the transport network, including addressing any problems that they might create through the provision of (or contributions towards) infrastructure and services and the adoption of Travel Plans;
- > Are designed in accordance with the County Council's Residential Design Guide (which has been developed in consultation with the District Councils), national guidelines and guidance on parking provided in PPG3 and PPG13.

To achieve this, the County Council will, in this Plan period:

- > In accordance with its Structure Plan policies, concentrate significant development in a limited number of locations (Oxford, Banbury, Bicester, Didcot, Grove and Witney) with the aim of developing self-contained settlements that have a balanced mix of residential development, employment opportunities and services;
- > Establish the overall infrastructure and service provision required to accommodate development and secure Developer Contributions for transport and other infrastructure and services as part of an overall coherent approach for providing the necessary facilities to promote sustainable development and enhance the transport systems in these settlements; and
- > Provide practical design information (including advising on parking standards for cars and cycles) and policy support, to inform and guide developers to create developments which:
 - Encourage more sustainable travel by minimising the need for car travel, particularly for shorter trips to local facilities;

- Encourage layouts that encourage public transport use, walking and cycling and, where appropriate, build in the concept of Home Zones;
- Include the adoption of effective, monitored Travel Plans to reduce the level of car-borne travel, for office development in particular; and
- Encourage planning applications for new developments that will create high quality street environments and improve quality of life for all.

Walking and Cycling Strategies

Detailed Walking and Cycling Strategies were developed in 1999 explaining the benefits that more walking and cycling can bring about. They outlined policies, standards, programmes and targets for increasing walking and cycling levels in the county and were included in Oxfordshire's first LTP as stand alone "daughter" documents. Many of the journeys by car in or into the county's congested urban areas are less than 5km long and so could be easily walked or cycled by most people. If a proportion of these journeys were made attractive enough for people to walk or cycle them, there could be significant benefits gained in terms of reducing congestion, addressing accessibility, improving air quality and contributing towards delivering the other LTP objectives.

The principles underlying the existing strategies and the reasons why walking and cycling should be encouraged are still as valid now as when they were first approved. However, the actions and programmes of work that flow from these underlying principles need to be reviewed before the final version of the LTP is submitted to ensure that they support the objectives of the second LTP as fully as possible. Infrastructure for the benefit of walkers and cyclists will need to be carefully prioritised in the second LTP period to ensure that improvements will solve or help to solve identified transport problems, rather than simply encouraging walking and cycling as ends in themselves. The County Council's aim, therefore, is to review the Walking and Cycling Strategies fully in time for the submission of the final version of this LTP.

Given the clear need for this LTP to address identified transport problems in Oxfordshire, it is unlikely that many cycling and walking schemes will be progressed in isolation from other initiatives. However, given the great potential that these modes have to support the effectiveness of other schemes in addressing problems, cycling and walking will always need to be considered as part of any proposed solution. The revised Walking and Cycling Strategies will help to ensure that the full benefits of these modes can be realised where they have a part to play.

It is envisaged that the revised Walking and Cycling Strategies will cover such topic areas as:

- > Infrastructure design standards - to ensure that all new or improved facilities will be effective at encouraging more cycling and walking where this will help to solve an identified problem. These standards should cover the full range of infrastructure that would help to encourage these modes e.g. crossing facilities, cycle lanes, cycle parking, tactile paving etc.
- > Cycle and Pedestrian Accessibility Audits - These will be developed to supplement the conclusions of the countywide accessibility audit carried out to date. The audits will help to identify walking and cycling schemes that will contribute to addressing accessibility problems.
- > Assessment of highway infrastructure - where there are any proposals to alter the highway, they need to be properly assessed to ensure that the needs of pedestrians and cyclists are fully taken into account. Assessments of infrastructure may reveal that improvements or alterations need to be made particularly in areas where walking and cycling has the potential to help address identified transport problems.
- > Mobility and visually impaired people - every opportunity should be taken to improve conditions for people with mobility and visual impairments. This is particularly the case where new cycling and walking facilities are being considered but also where existing highway infrastructure creates difficulties or acts as a barrier to such people.
- > Development proposals - when considering development proposals, the Council will need to ensure that opportunities are taken to promote walking and cycling by requiring that these users are given proper priority through the planning process and that developments are not located in such a way as to discourage walking and cycling.
- > Road safety - the Council will continue to be fully committed to providing road safety education that supports its policies of reducing casualties and at the same time promoting increased use of walking and cycling, particularly among school aged children.
- > Partnership and promotion - where improved or existing cycling and walking facilities help to deliver the LTP objectives a framework needs to be developed for promoting such infrastructure, as well as the benefits that more walking and cycling can bring about. Where appropriate, partnerships between the County Council and external organisations should be developed.

- > Maintenance - well maintained infrastructure is vital to encouraging people to walk or cycle, whether that infrastructure is new or existing, or on or away from the carriageway. The Council will need to consider how best to prioritise cycling and walking facilities in its highways maintenance policies and procedures.

Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)

The County Council has produced a full Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) which will act as a solid foundation for the incorporation of Rights of Way planning into local transport planning.

Within Oxfordshire there are 4,176 km of Public Rights of Way. According to current classifications:

- > The entire rights of way network should be available to walkers
- > 1,402 km of it should also be available to horse riders and cyclists
- > 321km available to horse carriage drivers and
- > 66km are defined as Byways Open to All Traffic on which motorised users have legal rights of use (with these users also having possible rights of use on a further 255km of Roads Used as Public Paths).

The fact that the rights of way network gives such extensive coverage of the county means that it has great potential to contribute towards delivering the objectives of this LTP rather than simply existing as a leisure resource in its own right. Indeed, a large number of sections of the rights of way network (particularly in the urban areas) already serve a useful transport function.

However, there are some sections of the network that are either not available to those for whom they are intended or that need to be improved to enable them to serve a useful purpose. In developing a draft RoWIP for Oxfordshire, a survey was undertaken to allow an assessment of the availability of the network. The main results of this survey showed that the vast majority of path links were free from major obstructions although only 65% were found to be easy to use, mainly because of defective signing or surfacing.

The vision of the draft Oxfordshire RoWIP is therefore:

“To improve existing public paths for all users and would be users, and improve the extent and use of the network, so that public rights of way fulfil their role as a vital part of life in the county.”

To realise this vision, four Priority Key Themes have been proposed and nine main outcomes identified as a Statement of Action which translate into a set of twenty five detailed focused actions serving as a basis for developing a

five year delivery plan. The delivery plan of the draft RoWIP will need to be taken into account in the full LTP that is submitted in March 2006. In this way, any identified RoWIP schemes that will help to address identified transport problems will need to be considered for inclusion in the five year programme of the LTP.

In developing a RoWIP for Oxfordshire, the Council consulted and liaised with key organisations including:

- > neighbouring highway authorities,
- > district and parish councils,
- > the Countryside Agency, AONB offices,
- > user and land management groups and organisations, and
- > interested individuals.

The Oxfordshire Citizens' Panel has also been used to assess levels of satisfaction with the rights of way network together with focus groups of Panel members to gain a deeper understanding of local views.

The County Council's main partner throughout the development process has been the Oxfordshire Countryside Access Forum, a local group made up of countryside users, land managers and other related interests, who have helped in the processes of assessment of need, definition and refinement of the action plan and drawing up a Statement of Action.

Wheelchair Use and Accessible Environments

National policy (as set out in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's "Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres" issued in 2005) states that local strategies should proactively develop and regenerate existing town centres to be more accessible for people with mobility difficulties. In this context, as opposed to the context outlined in the Framework Accessibility Strategy, accessible means:

"Ease and convenience of access by a choice of means of travel including the quality, quantity and type of car parking; the frequency and quality of public transport services and the range of customer origins served; and the quality of provision for pedestrians, cyclists and disabled people and the ease of access from main arrival points to the main attractions." (PPS6 4.4)

When designing schemes, and working with partners, good design will be promoted that ensures that the needs of disabled people are fully met and that pedestrian facilities are properly maintained. Facilities to meet these needs could include:

- > level or flush crossing points (dropped kerbs),
- > the correct installation of tactile paving surfaces,
- > signalized crossings (including rotating cone devices),
- > colour/tonal contrasted marking of street furniture and railings,
- > segregated pedestrian cycle facilities prioritised over unsegregated facilities,
- > information both electronic and hard copy,
- > accessible walks,
- > parking facilities,
- > real time information,
- > a commitment to bus driver disability equality training, and
- > bus stop infrastructure.

The County Council has three Access Officers, who can offer advice, information and support to help improve access to services for people with mobility difficulties. Measures to assist people with disabilities will often benefit other users as well, such as people with pushchairs, shoppers and the young.

The County Council is working with the District Councils to introduce more "Shopmobility" schemes across the county. These schemes can considerably ease problems of access to shops for people with mobility impairments.

Rural Transport

In seeking to achieve the objectives of this LTP, the County Council recognises that a significant proportion of the identified transport problems are located in the rural areas. The County Council has taken this into account in deciding the actions that will need to be taken to achieve the Plan's objectives. None of the actions identified apply only to rural areas although some of the actions will naturally help to address rural problems more than others.

The County Council will work with the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC) in their continued development of a freestanding Rural Transport Strategy (RTS) for the Oxfordshire Community Partnership. An outline for a RTS was prepared in November 2004 and set out a number of areas for action which accord well with the actions proposed in this Plan (e.g. promoting public transport and providing targeted improvements to walking and cycling facilities) and so, where appropriate, the County Council will support ORCC with the RTS' implementation.

Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles

The five district councils in Oxfordshire are responsible for the licensing of taxis and private hire vehicles, licensing drivers and for creating taxi ranks.

The County Council recognises that taxis and private hire vehicles play an important and integral role in complementing the public transport network by offering efficient and cost effective transport for people at times and in circumstances where public transport cannot be provided cost efficiently. This applies particularly in:

- > Smaller settlements away from the main transport corridors;
- > Evening travel outside of Oxford
- > Journeys involving the carriage of heavy or bulky goods.

As part of the emerging Accessibility Strategy taxis and private hire vehicles could provide a key role in increasing accessibility in many areas, both urban and rural, particularly during off peak periods. They provide a safe means of transport both in terms of being able to collect people from their homes and take them straight to their destinations, so reducing their sense of vulnerability which they may feel when standing at a bus stop, particularly during the hours of darkness. In many areas, they may be the only form of transport available to those who do not have access to a private car.

Each of the five District Councils in Oxfordshire has in place its own local policies on the licensing of taxis and private hire vehicles. These are summarised in the table below:

District Councils' Policies on Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles

Local Policies

Cherwell District Council

Restricted number of taxis. Licensing Committee decided to remove restriction in January 2004 but Matter still pending with the Council.

Oxford City Council

Restricts the numbers of hackney carriages; sets fares for hackney carriages; does not restrict the number of private hire vehicles; does not licence vehicles older than 6 years; vehicles safety monitored every 6 months; issues licences after stringent tests: checks with CRB, DVLA and medical examinations.

De-restriction of hackney numbers would exacerbate Oxford's traffic problems (including congestion and air pollution issues) to no apparent benefit - regular surveys do not indicate any un-met demand.

South Oxfordshire District Council

No restriction on the numbers of licences issued.

Vale of White Horse District Council

No restriction on the numbers of licences issued. System found to be self-regulating over the years.

West Oxfordshire District Council

No restriction on the numbers of licences issued. System found to be self-regulating.